THE
SILVER TAIL,
A TALE.

IN

TWO HEROIC EPISTLES,

FROM

Mr. S——Z, OF THE EXCHEQUER,

TO

SIGNORA A**J**E;

WITH

SIGNORA A****J**'S ANSWER

TO

MR. S***Z

And does it tempt thy Sacreligious Hands,
Or is it what the needy State demands?
Oh! had'ſt thou, cruel! been content to ſeize
Things more in Sight—or any Things but theſe.

LONDON:

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PREFATORY ARGUMENT.

A DUTY being levied by Act of Parliament on the Luxuries of Life in general, and on Plate in particular—Mr. S----s, a Clerk in the Exchequer, who gives Notice to thole who neglect to pay the Duty, amongſt the reſt wrote to Madam A ----- to remind her of the Revenue-Laws of this Country; and in the genteeleſt Manner gave her to underſtand that he had an Information againſt a certain Smuggled and concealed Quantity which the had in daily Uſe. In Conſequence of ſuch Remonſtrance the ſubſequent Epiſtles were written.

PREFATORY ARGUMENT.

A DUTY being levied by Act of Parliament on the Luxuries of Life in general, and on Plate in particular—Mr. ~~Schultz~~, a Clerk in the Exchequer, who gives Notice to those who neglect to pay the Duty, amongst the rest wrote to[x] Madam ~~Aguiari~~ to remind her of the Revenue-Laws of this Country; and in the genteelest Manner gave her to understand that he had an Information against a certain smuggled and concealed Quantity which she had in daily Use. In Consequence of such Remonstrance the subsequent Epistles were written.

[x] La Signora Aguiari, called the Bastardella, a famous Italian Singer, came over in 1774, & was engaged to sing twelve times at the Pantheon during the winter of 1775 at the rate of 1200 guineas. She was a Foundling, & the story was that being exposed on a dunghill, she was discovered as a Sow was eating her hinder parts, which were afterwards supplied with a silver plate.

SILVER-TAIL.

A TALE.

O you, fweet Alice, on the Britifh fhore,
Whom ladies honour, and whom men adore;
Whom all the world purfue with various praife,
The warbling wonder of thefe long-long days;
Who chant'ft with fo much melody and eafe,
That joy and rapture on our fenfes feize;

THE

SILVER-TAIL,

A TALE.

TO you, ſweet Alien, on the Britiſh ſhore,
Whom ladies honour, and whom men adore;
Whom all the world purſue with various praiſe,
The warbling wonder of theſe ſing-ſong days.
Who chant'ſt with ſo much melody and eaſe,
That joy and rapture on our ſenſes ſeize!

Thus the ſhrill lark high pois'd in æther floats,
While raviſh'd ears below applaud his notes;
And as the muſic charms the gaping throng,
They hail the wond'rous Being of the ſong.

What ſhall I ſay, a poor Exchequer Mavis,
To ſuch a ſoft Italian rara avis?
Say what apology ſhall I propoſe
To ſooth the rigour of revenue laws?
What ſhall I ſay, to one compell'd by fate
To try this ſhore? yet tax her tail of plate!
Curſe all informers, whom reward makes wary,
To thus exciſe thy ſide-board A**J*RIE!

Blythe, gentle, mutilated, buxom dame,
Whoſe top, whoſe bottom, is alike the ſame;
Whoſe ſilver voice, and eke whoſe ſilver tail,
While plate and nature laſt can never fail.

In voice, in form confeſs'd ſo very rich,
To grace the new Pantheon's higheſt niche.
Where the gay world reſort, and own the boon,
Though for one hundred pounds you grant a tune.

Gay, frantic, diſſipated, wanton age,
Which gives up health and fortune to the ſtage;
Who for the * HEINELL, and * BACCELLI's feet, ** female Dancers.
Sell ev'ry acre, and the manor ſeat!
But what's the paſſe-piè and cabriole,
To A**J*RIE's pritty warbling hole?
For tho' ſweet Orpheus could not move Old Nick,
Yet ſtill our GIARDINI's fiddle-ſtick,
With BACH—with ABEL's fingers, and your yell, } musicians.
Will rather ſink than ſave us from his hell.

MADAM, before your voice I tembling ſtand,
Dreading to name the cuſtom of this land;

Which

Which ſubjects ev'ry wheel, and each eſtate,
Nay, day-light to a tax, as well as plate:
Nor do the laws regard, They'll have their tax,
Whether within the houſe, or on our backs:
And if Lord North—(the great exciſeman's) right,
Your *plate* is ſmuggled from the vulgar ſight.
Which, if diſcover'd, you'll the ſecret rue,
And forfeit even goods and chattels too.
For if obdurate you refuſe the rate,
And ſpurn the laws; the Premier of the State
In all official dignity will come,
And ſeize the ſilver of your ſhielded bum.
Ye Gods avert the action and the law,
And ſave your tail from ſuch a monſter's * claw;

* The Inquiſition of Portugal is not a feller monſter than the *legal Exciſe* of England.

A monſter

A monſter more deſtructive, grim, and fell,
Than the three-headed growling dog of Hell:
For the Excise on this deluded ſtrand,
Excels the ugliest giant of the land;
He nor regards the beauteous maiden's fears,
The ſighs of matrons, nor the widow's tears;
But he without diſtinction levies all,
The rich, the poor, the wiſe, the great, the ſmall:
And tho' your's border's on its native mine,
Cloſe to a country, own'd by all divine;
Yet if you ſtill refuſe to pay the rate,
Indeed, he'll ſeize your perſon and your plate.
Oh! let the harſh idea be forgot,
A ruffian's hand on ſuch a velvet ſpot.

There was a time—a voice like your's might pleaſe,
As Sirens whilom did—on claſſic ſeas:

No warbling notes can make Exciſe relent,
He's all for ſubſidies and cent per cent;
He thinks of nought but feathers, tar, and tax,
His heart and ears are ſear'd alike with wax.
Truſt not, ſweet Seraph, to his clumſy feel,
His hands are iron, and his heart is ſteel!
For what, ye Gods! will be your hapleſs lot,
If you expoſe to him the ſacred ſpot?

Once on a time a blooming, country maid,
Unus'd to ſervice, but well form'd for trade,
Turn'd with contempt upon her native ſpot,
And bent her ſteps to London from her cot.
In the ſtage-coach the damſel took a place,
To raiſe her fortune by the charms of face.
As on they travell'd over Lincoln Heath,
Where robbers weave themſelves the hempen wreath,

The paſſengers with doleful faces told,
What numbers had been plunder'd of their gold:
This much alarm'd our beauteous maiden's heart,
Leſt that her little ſtore and ſhe might part.
A large, old watch ſhe had—a warming pan,
Left by the father to his daughter NAN;
Which being a fav'rite relique of the north,
Encreas'd moſt largely the intrinſic worth:
To ſave this watch became the maiden's part,
But to ſecrete it puzzled all her art:
The ſeat, the cuſhion, pocket, and her breaſt,
Were each by turns propos'd to be the beſt:
But Nan whoſe active genius caſt around,
An hiding place more ſnug and ſecret found;
No ſage Duenna, or experienc'd punk,
Secur'd it ſafer in a hairy trunk:

She

She in a ſnugger corner plac'd the watch,
Which to preſerve, nor needed lock or latch.
The little place was perfectly ſecure,
And when the watch was in—ſhe clos'd the door.
Long o'er the naked heath they had not roll'd,
Before an highwayman demands their gold:
They gave their caſh—while trembled beauteous NAN,
And luckleſs ſtruck the hidden warming-pan.
The thief with pleaſure heard the ſilver ſound,
Turn'd to the ſpot, and the repeater found;
At the conceit he laugh'd—but held his claim,
And ſeiz'd the prize in ſpite of Nanny's ſhame.
O let me then for once o'er you prevail,
To pay the duty, than to ſhew your tail.

There's not a golden touch-hole in the land,
But what hath felt th' exciſe of ſome ſoft hand;

The men impoſe it on the yielding fair,
And ladies pay the duty for their ware.

Ulysses thus, when gay Achilles fled,*
Follow'd the ſtripling to his ſweetheart's bed;
When ſhe was naked to his view reveal'd,
Behold he ſaw the hero's ſilver ſhield;
The place for privacy the maiden choſe,
And hid his armour underneath her clothes.
Have you not Ag*j*ri, thus conceal'd
Some huge Italian's maſſy, ſilver ſhield?
If ſo, your ſituations are the ſame,
At once alike your prudence and his fame:
Therefore, I beg, that you'll the tribute pay,
Nor truſt your reputation to a lay!

* Achilles to avoid going againſt Troy, and very wiſely, becauſe he was told he would be certainly killed, hid himſelf amongſt the Laſſes of Lycomedes; and got Miſs Deidamia with bearne: but the cunning of old Ulyſſes found him out, by the diſcovering of his armour made by Vulcan.

For though this nation's going to hell—headlong,
Riſk not thy future fortune on a ſong!
Songs, I confeſs, now ſet agog the town,
Italian† ſpiders bite the king and clown;
In ev'ry corner lords and ladies ſquall,
And bunters learn of them to catterwaul:
Lords ſcribble muſic—ladies ſonnets write,
Organs through ev'ry ſtreet grind day and night;
Fiddlers, known fools, attract the wiſeſt ears,
And glees‡ and catches fill the Houſe of Peers:

† Tarrantulas.

‡ Lord Sandwich is remarkable for his quickneſs at a catch*. When lately debating in the houſe on naval affairs, the Duke of Richmond obſerved, The Albion was fit for any ſervice: when his Lordſhip roſe, and replied in the words of Chevy-chaſe——

" I truſt I have within the Realm,
" Five hundred good as He."

* The facetious Author of the Heroic Poſtſcript ſays—of Gay's Pick-Pocket.

" See Jemmy Twitcher ſhamble—ſtop—ſtop Thief!
" He ſtole the Earl of Denbigh's Handkerchief."

Our

Our *faithful Commons* too have caught the rig,
And *Magna Charta's* ſet to a Scot's jig.
The pow'r of muſic leads us all aſtray,
And makes our large wigg'd Judges dance the hay:
Religious tabbies too neglect their pray'rs,
And give up anthems for an eunuch's airs.
Muſic hath charms to make or mend a flaw,
Eraſe a record, or reverſe a law:
Muſic hath charms to ſtrip th' Exchequer cheſt,
But cannot move a hard Exciſeman's breaſt:
O'er Monarchs, Biſhops, Butchers, you'll prevail,
And yet, not ſave the duty on your tail.
Was there within my beating breaſt one hope,
If I could trill like you, or rhime like Pope.
By ſweet *Seſtini*'s charms I ſwear I'd ſing, a comic Italian Singer
Perform a miracle—and move the King:

If

If *Fiſhar*'s hautboy, or ſoft *Tacet*'s flute, *musicians.*
Cannot the rigour of the law diſpute;
What hope for you but a relentleſs jail?
Shall gloomy Newgate hold thy brilliant tail?
To pay the tribute be thy pride and choice,
Nor riſk thy *brilliant* tail and *brilliant* voice.

To-morrow morning, if you'll deign to ſee
A friend, before the ſervant brings the tea;
With all the chaſtity that eunuchs boaſt,
I'll only ſip your tea and eat your toaſt.
Such are the wiſhes of an unſeen friend,
Who means not to trepan your latter-end;
For if the viſit's opportune and ſuits,
No vig'rous meaſures will be us'd by S—s.

F I N I S

In the PRESS, and will be Publiſhed ſpeedily,

Signiora A**G**IE's Anſwer to Mr. S——z.